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The September number contains a poem "The Unreturning," an appreciation, "Remembrance," "Educational Measurements in the High School Work," "Legitimate Homework," "Why Waste Words," "Teaching Current Events," etc.

The tone of the articles is "homey" and yet strictly of the product of thinkers and scholars; the material is live, up-to-date, hot from the schoolroom; the form is attractive, simple and easily handled. The purpose of the bulletin appears to be well carried out: "Established as a clearing house for ideas, the Bulletin of High Points aims to give expression to the best professional opinion of the teachers of the city."—L. A. W.

NOTES AND NEWS REGARDING WORK OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON MATHE- MATICAL REQUIREMENTS

A PRELIMINARY report on "The Reorganization of the First Courses in Secondary School Mathematics" prepared by a sub-committee, which was authorized to publish it, was issued on November 25th. It is being made the basis of discussion by organizations, committees, local groups, etc., throughout the country. Over 30 such organizations are at present at work on this report.

The whole of the meeting of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in the Middle States and Maryland in Philadelphia on November 29th was devoted to the discussion of this report; it had a prominent place on the program of the Central Association of Science and Mathematics Teachers in Chicago on November 28th and 29th and at the meeting of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England in Boston on December 6th.

Committees representing organizations in the following states are actively coöperating with the National Committee: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, Missouri and Texas.

Local groups or clubs are studying the report in Boston, Springfield (Mass.), Providence, New Haven, New York City, Washington, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Columbus (Ohio), Terre Haute, Chicago, St. Louis, St. Paul, Minneapolis and in several smaller cities.

Meetings in addition to those previously announced at which the work of the National Committee will be discussed are as follows: Mathematical Association of America in St. Louis, December 29th and in New York, January 2nd; Ohio State Teachers Association, Columbus, December 30th; Pennsylvania State Educational Association, Philadelphia, December

30th; Association of Teachers of Mathematics in the Middle States and Maryland, Southern Section, Baltimore, December 13th, Syracuse Section, Syracuse, New York, December 30th.

The next meeting of the National Committee will occur in New York City on December 30th. The principal items on the program for this meeting are the consideration of the report on "The Reorganization of the First Courses in Secondary School Mathematics," the report on "The Valid Aims and Purposes of the Study of Mathematics" and the proposed revision of college entrance requirements.

The United States Bureau of Education has offered to publish the reports of the National Committee in the form of leaflets or bulletins.

A Mathematics Section of the West Virginia State Teachers Association was organized in Fairmont on November 28th. Professor John Eiesland of the University of West Virginia was elected chairman of the newly formed section. Professor C. N. Moore spoke in behalf of the work of the National Committee.

BOOK NOTES AND REVIEWS

NOUVEAU COURS FRANCAIS. By André C. Fontaine. Ginn and Co., revised edition, 1919.

This new French Grammar attempts to put into practice certain original ideas that are interesting. In general the plan seems to have been to delay the more complex parts of grammar as long as possible so as to enable the beginner to become fluent in his command of what has been presented, and at the same time to acquire a relatively large vocabulary in French of a practical nature.

In application, this plan encounters several difficulties. To mention only one: it becomes very difficult to make the students' progress in translation from French into English conform to his advance in grammar, unless the former part of his instruction be inexcusably deferred.

I believe the average teacher will find serious fault with the grammar because of the length of the lessons. The eighth lesson may be an extreme case; it is seven pages long and contains: a vocabulary of eighteen words, the cardinal and ordinal numerals, dates, days of the month and week, time of the day, present tense of the *iv* conjugation, conjugation drills, a page of French for translation, fourteen sentences with blanks to be filled in, twelve sentences to be answered orally, and finally an exercise of seventeen sentences. Such a lesson would require three or four recitations to be thoroughly mastered. The division of a lesson in this

way is very objectionable, causing undue haste one day and loss of time the next.

The introductory chapter on pronunciation gives as accurate indications of French sounds as is possible when comparison is being made with English sounds; some of the English sound-equivalents are very happily selected. On the other hand the treatment of the vowel *e* (*é, è, ê*) does not appear to one clear. One is inclined also to object to such statements as: "Nasalized *i* is represented by *in, im, yn, ym, ain, aim,*" etc.

Some excellent ideas have been applied by the author in his handling of details of French grammar. This is true particularly of the verb. The division of verbs, for example, into two regular conjugations and the irregular verbs appears a good plan. However, I believe that the treatment of some of the tenses has been put off too late: the future tense is not presented until nearly four-fifths of the grammar has been covered.

The exercises are very complete and well balanced; it is a pity that this important feature should be spoiled by the extreme length of the lessons.

On the whole the grammar is disappointing. In spite of several excellent and original qualities, I fear that in practice, in the high school or college, it would be found confusing and impractical.—O. T.

VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION. By Rufus W. Stimson, with introduction by Paul H. Hanus. Pages xi + 468. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1919.

This book was prepared as a contribution to the study of vocational education, to supply the increasing demand for information on the subject of supervised agriculture in the school, and to outline the home project plan so as to meet the requirements of the Smith-Hughes Act that provision be made for at least six months of supervised practice in agriculture each year, for all those schools which seek federal aid under this act for instruction in vocational agriculture. The entire book is built around the home project plan with numerous examples in both plant and animal projects, and should be of great service as a text, reference book, or guide to students and teachers of vocational agriculture and as a suggestive aid to those preparing to teach this new and important subject. As a correlating agency the book could be made helpful also to teachers of high school science and mathematics.

Chapters on the project study *versus* the subject study, on the home-project school *versus* the "self-contained" school, on vegetable growing project study, all thoughtfully prepared and illustrated, are among

the interesting features of the book. The suggestions to supervisors, superintendents, directors, and vocational agricultural instructors are practical and to the point. The example of a state agricultural project study bibliography (in Chapter V) is very suggestive to students of the general subject of vocational agricultural education.

This book is more or less a pioneer on the somewhat new but vital subject which federal aid has given prominence to during the past two years. But it will doubtless fill an immediate need and have a wide circulation.—E. W. K.

ELEMENTARY BIOLOGY, AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF LIFE. By Benjamin C. Gruenberg. Pages v + 528. Ginn and Company, Boston, New York, Chicago.

The material, plan and method of this book are the results of seventeen years of work which the author has given to teaching science to adults and adolescents, and represent, in his opinion, "the kind of knowledge and the kind of attitude that are both wanted and needed, and the kind that it is desirable, from a social point of view, that all our citizens should acquire sooner or later." The book could, therefore, be called "a social biology."

In at least two particulars the book shows very suggestive differences from most volumes on the subject. In the first place, it avoids the specialists' arbitrary divisions of biology into botany, zoology, etc., which seem "to confuse rather than to illumine," and undertakes to emphasize what animals and plants *do* instead of defining and describing, and analyzing the different kinds of organisms that animals and plants *are*. This would seem to be a sound method of presenting biology or indeed almost any experimental science. The other difference which the book reveals when compared with other treatments of the subject naturally grows out of the difference just noted, and is found in the emphasis given to those common, everyday phenomena and changes which need to be understood and controlled, and to those problems whose proper solution promotes human well being.

The volume is divided into six parts as follows: "The World in Which We Live"; "Life Processes of the Organism"; "The Continuity of Life"; "Hereditarity and Evolution"; "Man and Other Organisms." Some of the interesting topics considered are: health and food standards, food requirements, and food habits; stimulants, narcotics, and poisons; alcohol and health, and alcohol and society; ventilation, and contaminated air; first aid; hygiene of the circulatory system, of excretion, of the eyes; habit; reproduction